

ABOUT GROWTH

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION ABOUT GROWTH MANAGEMENT

SPRING 2005



Washington State
Department of
Community, Trade and
Economic Development

Contents

Parks and open space planning important part of growth management	2
Greenprint for King County: An open space strategy	3
Sumner forestry has roots in comprehensive plan	4
Urban forestry program flourishing in Spokane	5
Richland park plans protect natural features and make land and water available for recreation	6
Partnerships pay dividends in recreational opportunities in Thurston County	7
Cheney parks and recreation – A community success story	8

Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation: Serving city and county with one system

By David Judd
Director, Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation

The Vancouver Parks and Recreation Department and the Clark County Parks Department became the first consolidated city-county parks and recreation department in Washington on January 1, 1997.

The discussion to consolidate was initiated by the local Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Realtors, and the building industry in agreement to support the enactment of local park impact fees. Additionally, management, the City Council, and the Board of County Commissioners viewed consolidation as a way to achieve greater efficiencies in all levels of parks and recreation services.

The consolidation created a unified department with responsibility for park and recreation service provision within the entire county. It organized park planning into two realms: an urban park system serving residents of both the City of Vancouver and the unincorporated urban area; and a regional park system serving residents of the entire county.

The consolidation has resulted in increased productivity throughout the

department. In the last year before consolidation the city and the county acquired seven urban park sites. Since consolidation more than 50 acquisitions for the urban park system have been completed.

The consolidated department now manages a single, merged park impact fee program for the urban area of Vancouver, in addition to a real estate excise tax program serving four distinct programs and a Conservation Areas program serving

the entire county, all without additional staff. The Conservation Areas program has acquired over 20 sites, totaling more than 1,400 acres since 1997; conserving our most important open space and habitat areas without regard to jurisdiction.

The synergy of blended teams has been a great benefit. Co-location of staff makes it easy to involve all divisions in parks and recreation matters. Work teams interact with one another and make decisions for the good of the

whole. Functions such as grant writing and updating comprehensive plans are more fluid, with all the pieces of the puzzle close at hand. Projects can be assigned to the best person for the job instead of



The recently renovated Esther Short Park, the oldest public square in the state, is one of the parks managed under the combined Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation.

PHOTO / CTED RITA R. ROBISON

ABOUT GROWTH

Published quarterly by the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, Growth Management Services, 906 Columbia St. SW, PO Box 42525, Olympia, WA 98504-2525.

CTED is the state's lead agency charged with providing financial and technical resources to build livable and sustainable communities.

Juli Wilkerson, CTED Director

CTED administers the state's Growth Management Act. Its role is to assist and enable local governments to design their own programs to fit local needs and opportunities, consistent with the GMA.

Nancy K. Ousley, Assistant Director, Local Government Division

Leonard Bauer, AICP, Managing Director, Growth Management Services
Rita R. Robison, AICP, Editor

About Growth features topics that are of high interest and strives to reflect a wide range of views from various perspectives. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily CTED's opinions or positions.

For comprehensive information about growth management:
www.cted.wa.gov/growth

CTED is committed to equal employment opportunities and nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or disabled or Vietnam-era veteran status.

Persons or organizations wishing to receive *About Growth* may do so by notifying this office by phone or at the address shown above. Address corrections are also encouraged and welcomed. Return mailing label to the editor with changes noted.

This publication is available in alternate format upon request. Events sponsored by CTED are accessible to persons with disabilities. Accommodations may be arranged with a minimum of ten working days notice to the editor or by calling 360-725-3000.



Printed on Recycled / Recyclable Paper

Parks and open space planning important part of growth management



By Leonard Bauer
Managing Director, Growth Management Services

In 2002 the Washington State Legislature required two additional elements to be part of the comprehensive plans completed under the state Growth Management Act (GMA). The two new elements are to address economic development and parks and recreation.

Although the requirement for the two new elements does not become effective until two years after state funding is made available, many cities and counties are including these elements as they review and update their comprehensive plans. To assist these jurisdictions, Growth Management Services (GMS) is updating its guidebooks on these two important topics. The economic development guidebook update is in progress and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2005. An updated parks and recreation planning guidebook is now available to local governments.

The new guidebook – *Planning for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space in Your Community* – is a collaborative effort between GMS and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC). It includes information that will help counties and cities develop parks plans that meet the GMA parks planning requirements [RCW 36.70A.070(8)] and the planning requirements for parks grant funding from the IAC.

Although parks, recreation, and open space planning are goals of the GMA, the act doesn't spell out how these goals should be accomplished. The guidebook discusses integrating parks planning with other elements of the comprehensive planning process, such as land use, environmental protection, resource lands conservation, and managing stormwater. It also identifies sources for funding parks, recreation, and open space to serve your community.

The guidebook discusses issues regarding protecting and maintaining these

important lands. It's important to involve the people who will use, design, build, fund, and maintain park and open space lands and facilities, and coordinate closely with other service providers such as school districts and private athletic facilities. Such involvement will help ensure parks and open spaces that truly meet community needs and function well.

For a copy of the guidebook, see www.cted.wa.gov/growth or www.iac.wa.gov.

Parks, recreation, and open space programs are an essential ingredient to a community's quality of life. Not only are they critical to the physical activity and health of community residents and workers, but they're also gathering places for social interaction and community festivals. Planning ahead and identifying funding for these key facilities is just as important as it is to plan for other essential infrastructure such as water, transportation, and wastewater facilities.

American corporations are recognizing this fact, as well. Funding opportunities have been announced recently by Starbucks and Wal-Mart that may help your community acquire or improve its parks and open space.

Starbucks has expanded its neighborhood parks grants to make \$450,000 available to community groups undertaking park improvement projects in Snohomish, King, and Pierce counties. Grant applications are available in participating Starbucks locations or at www.starbuckslovesparks.com.

Wal-Mart recently announced its *Acres for America* program to provide \$3.1 million funding annually to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for projects that conserve important habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants through acquisition of interest in real property. Contact your regional NFWF director at <http://www.nfwf.org/contact.htm>.

GMS staff are available to help local governments planning for parks, recreation, and open space. Contact us at 360-725-3000 for assistance.

Greenprint for King County: An open space strategy

By Mark Isaacson
 Director, King County Water
 and Land Resources Division

King County is charged with protecting more than 2,100 square miles of the region's cultural and natural resources.

A legacy of successful county governance is the vast network of nearly 30,000 acres of protected open space resources, as well as over 100,000 acres of agricultural and forest resource lands that are permanently protected from development. This network of regionally significant open spaces support a wide variety of public benefits including: adequate supply of clean water, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, healthy forests, working farms, and protection from flooding. King County residents enjoy an unparalleled quality of life as result of government's sustained commitment to environmental protection and open space protection.

However, there are regionally significant open space resources, such as regional trail connections, salmonid habitat, forestry, and flood-

plain resources, that require additional protection in order to ensure that future generations experience our current quality of life. It's critical that remaining, regionally significant, open space resources that contribute to our quality of life are conserved before they are lost forever.

King County Executive Ron Sims announced this spring a visionary, open space conservation strategy called the Greenprint for King County. The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) produced the Greenprint for King County in 2004, as part of its regional conservation initiative, the Greenprint for Puget Sound.

The recently completed Greenprint for King County reflects a targeted open space conservation vision that spans the spectrum of regionally significant open space lands within the county: regional trails, ecological lands, farms, forests, flood plain resource protection areas, and passive parks. This regional conservation vision was based on the project's landscape characterization computer model, completion of a county-scale conservation funding

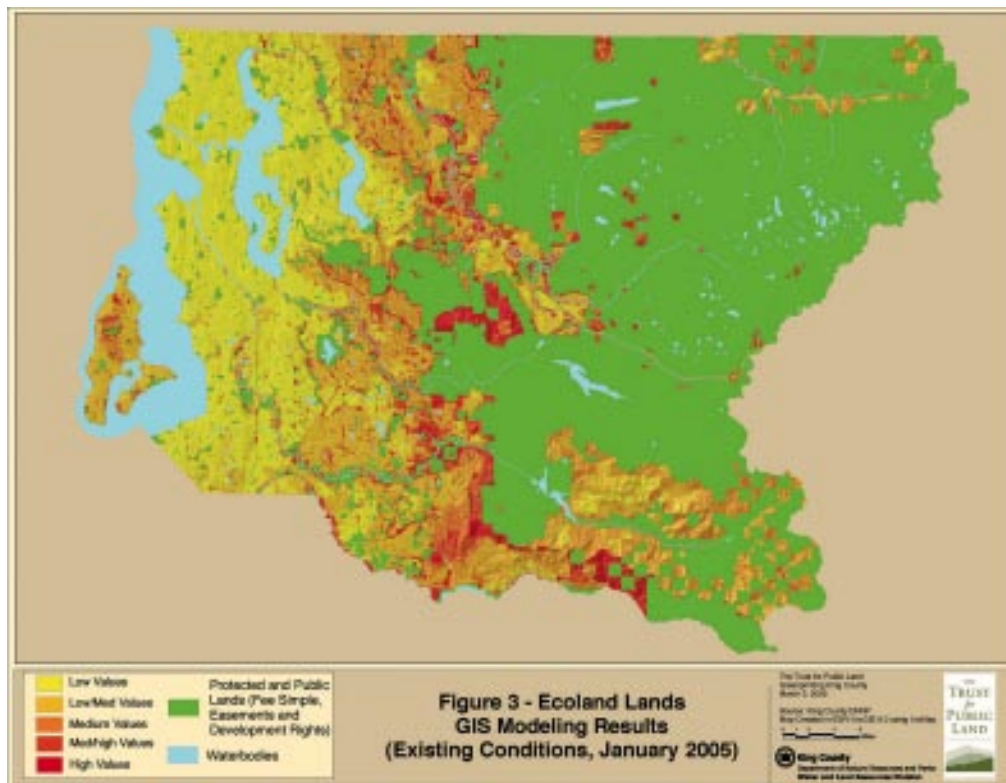
assessment, and extensive outreach with city and non-profit conservation partners to ensure innovative approaches to protecting the county's remaining high value open spaces.

The Greenprint for King County will maximize the efficient use of public dollars for open space acquisition and conservation purposes. The Greenprint's vision builds on the county's successful open space protection actions and information obtained from a computerized mapping and landscape analysis tool.

The Greenprint for King County computer model is a state-of-the-art geographic information system (GIS) that provides efficient access to 50 electronic data sets for the purposes of characterizing current open space and resource conditions. Future acquisition decisions, land management choices, and open space protection policy decisions within unincorporated King County will use information from this powerful analytic tool. The GIS model can also serve as a regional source of information for the county's public

agency, private property, and non-profit partners in open space protection. As new information and policy emerges from regional initiatives such as the soon-to-be-completed water resource inventory area salmon plans and the forthcoming King County Flood Hazard Reduction Plan, the Greenprint computer model will be updated.

Through innovative programs such as the Greenprint for King County, current and future generations will benefit from protected forests, waterways, regional trail networks, and ecologically rich natural areas



Sumner forestry has roots in comprehensive plan

By Lee Anderson
Parks and Facilities Manager, and

John Doan
City Administrator

The small city of Sumner's extensive Urban Forestry Program is rooted in the City's 1994 comprehensive plan policies on open space. Policy 2.2 of the Parks and Open Space Element reads:

Adopt an urban forestry program to encourage the preservation and planting of trees on public and private property.

Since that time, working through a volunteer Forestry Commission, Sumner has planted thousands of trees and improved the quality of the city's forest. The city has received the National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City recognition every year since 1994, along with several other awards.

The forestry interest started with a disgruntled parks commissioner who objected to how some city trees were trimmed. Sumner didn't have the resources to hire an arborist, so a community committee was formed. The city found volunteer expertise within the community including a local nursery owner, a landscape designer, an electric utility employee, and a Christmas tree farmer who is also a national Christmas tree expert.

Sumner's Forestry Commission makes tree planting recommendations, obtains city funding for planting projects, helps with beatification, and helps citizens make good tree decisions. City staff has developed their own expertise with the help of a paid consultant.

The commission received a grant from the state Department of Natural Resources and USDA Forest Service to develop an Urban Forestry Strategy in 1995. The strategy is the guide for how the public and private sector invest in the urban forest. The planning process for the strategy included an inventory of the city's urban forest and a community survey asking for perceptions about



PHOTO / COURTESY OF THE CITY OF SUMNER

trees. The council-adopted strategy identifies projects, programs, and policies to ensure a high quality forest. The plan was updated with additional grants in 2003.

In addition to planting along streets and in city parks and opens spaces, other projects have included planting a tree arboretum along spare railroad right-of-way, offering tree care classes, and developing a plan to maintain the trees in the city's forested watershed.

Program changes in the city include:

- Adopting new maintenance standards for the care of street trees.
- Budgeting money for the care of street and park trees.
- Reviewing and caring of large and historic trees regularly.
- Training for city engineering and parks staff on tree planting and care.
- Developing partnerships with businesses.
- Creating a street tree permit.
- Helping the city and citizens choose the right tree for the right place.

The commission used their expertise to inventory the many historic trees in the city cemetery as part of planning for cemetery expansion. The hallmark of the commission's work is the community

tree planting. Each year the commission selects a city street to be featured. The city partners with the residents to select a tree to be planted on the street. The city purchases the trees and provides resources to help the neighborhood plant the trees.

"In addition to doing all the other positive things that trees do in our city, the tree planting brings neighbors together," said Steve Allsop, city council member. "We saw neighbors meet each other who had not met before when we planted trees on Ryan Avenue."

Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation: Serving city and county with one system

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

assignments being made purely along jurisdictional lines. The sharing of technology, best practices, and equipment through combined park and facility maintenance management has resulted in cost savings, greater efficiencies, and improved accountability.

The combination of city and county park design and development functions has resulted in a sharing of successful design practices and a more systematic monitoring of all park construction projects. The outcomes have been improved park designs, better managed construction projects, and quicker turnaround on park planning projects.

The community has benefited greatly from the consolidation. Citizens no longer have to go to separate offices for parks and recreation information and services – the customer service staff can answer citizen questions about all aspects of the department.

The department is able to view conservation issues by focusing on the significance of the area to preserve, not the jurisdiction in charge. People like to know the city and county are utilizing their tax dollars to work cooperatively. The net effect is a unified, more efficient, less costly park system for all of Clark County.

Urban forestry program flourishing in Spokane

By Jim Flott
Urban Forester, City of Spokane

The City of Spokane's Urban Forestry staff of two supervises and manages all trees on public property including street and park trees, trees on conservation land, and trees on property owned by other city departments. Within the Spokane city limits are 50,000 street trees adjoining residences, business, churches, and hospitals, and another 20,000 park trees and trees on property owned by other city departments.

With such a vast community forest, our staff priorities include: removal of approximately 1,875 street trees that have been designated high risk; pruning of 47,000 street trees and 19,000 park trees; and planting trees in nearly 27,000 available new tree locations.

In developing levels of service for urban forestry, current policies, procedures, funding levels, and tree inventory date were identified. Five quantifiable measures of service have been established:

- High-risk abatement.
- Mature tree care.
- Young tree care.
- Tree planting.
- Administration and education.

All of Spokane's tree work is performed in compliance with American National Standards Institute standards and International Society of Arboriculture specifications.

Maintaining a level of service standard is critical since the Spokane's Urban Forestry staff responds to approximately 15 calls a day from citizens. More than 300 permit requests for removal, pruning, and planting from commercial tree firms and city residents are reviewed and field-inspected annually.

In 2005 our major challenge continues to be adequate program funding. To meet our recommended level of service

would require funding Spokane's Urban Forestry program at \$2,618,000. And to meet the minimum standards of Tree City USA and Spokane's Street Tree Ordinance, our annual budget would need to be \$500,000. Our 2005 Urban Forestry budget is under \$125,000. With city budgets being cut, staff must be more resourceful than ever.

So how do we make up for revenue? We look outside the box through creative programs and the continual education of citizens on the importance of Spokane's trees.

Spokane's Arbor Day and Fall Leaf Festivals are primary public education and interactive events. Staff is also involved in innovative and collaborative programs such as Read For Trees offered through the Spokane Public Libraries; Susie's Forest, a street tree planting program spearheaded by a private citizen in memory of her daughter; Reforest

Spokane, in conjunction with the

Spokane Park Foundation;

and our new Adopt-A-

Park program which

allows citizens to

volunteer for tree

planting projects in city parks.

The process and challenges of establishing Spokane's Urban

Forestry Program has been

long and involved, but worth the

time because the entire community benefits from an extensive, healthy, and well-designed forest.

As early as 1978 a group of citizens interested in Spokane's urban forest began to address the various components of a formal urban forestry program. This effort continued through the years and in 1995, citizens and the city began drafting a street tree ordinance as a component of an Urban Forestry Program.

Ice Storm '96 increased public interest in Spokane's community forest. The street tree ordinance was approved in 1999 and the Spokane Park Board approved the Vegetation Management Plan a component of the tree ordinance in 2002.



Richland park plans protect natural features and make land and water available for recreation

By Wyn Birkenthal

Director, Richland Parks and Recreation Department

Richland contains three distinct landforms that give the city its physical character and create many of its outdoor recreation opportunities. These landforms are the Columbia River, Yakima River, and treeless hills of South Richland, highlighted by 1,200-foot high Badger Mountain. Park and open space planning over the last five years has concentrated on preserving these assets and making them available for recreation.

Richland's seven miles of Columbia River shoreline contain a ribbon of Corps of Engineers ownership that is leased to the city for park and recreation purposes. Leslie Groves, Howard Amon, and Columbia Point Marina parks are anchor regional parks located along this shoreline. Each park is connected by a paved riverfront bicycle/pedestrian trail. This linear run of waterfront parks and trail has become the backbone of the city's park system since 2001 when the one-mile trail segment linking Howard Amon Park with Columbia Point Marina Park to the south was completed with the assistance of a \$155,000 Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation grant.

The city's park planners face a crucial challenge to extend the riverfront linear park system eastward to connect with Kennewick's 365-acre Columbia Park. To accomplish this the trail must span the wetlands that surround the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia rivers and proceed east on top of a flood control levee before connecting with the western edge of Columbia Park.

Two of the great park planning challenges for Richland have been to provide neighborhood and community parks for the growing population of the

Badger Mountain area and to preserve the slopes of the mountain for trail, habitat, and open space purposes. During the past year, several neighborhood parks have been developed

landowners to reopen existing recreational easement across privately held properties on the Yakima River. This multiyear process has resulted in a set of use regulations that protects private



Richland's Lewis and Clark Interpretive Overlook, near the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia rivers, features a U.S. map etched in concrete showing the route of explorers Lewis and Clark.

PHOTO / COURTESY OF THE CITY OF RICHLAND

in the South Richland growth area using the proceeds from park mitigation fees collected from new housing starts. A 40-acre community park site was acquired on a lower slope of the mountain where view home construction is accelerating rapidly.

A third major effort is underway to create an unbroken greenway along the Yakima River from the confluence with the Columbia running north to the city limits and beyond. Richland has the benefit of the federally protected Yakima Delta Wetlands area and the 300-acre Chamna Natural Preserve which combine to protect wildlife habitat and provide non-motorized public access to the Yakima for hiking, fishing, birding, and horseback riding.

The city's Parks and Recreation Commission has been working with

property from damage and at the same time allows citizens to traverse the riverbank during daylight hours.

In addition to incorporating natural features into the park system, Richland has also developed a series of active recreation facilities to meet the needs of its 42,000 residents. The most significant of these is a 21,000 square foot Community Center funded with general obligation bonds. The center opened in October of 2001.

The most recent major addition to the city's recreation inventory is a 23,000 square foot concrete surface skate park that opened in April. Primarily grants and donations funded the skate park project valued at \$1 million dollars.

Partnerships pay dividends in recreational opportunities in Thurston County

By Michael Welter
Director, Thurston County Parks
and Recreation Department

It's common in Washington counties for a struggle to ensue when trying to match the needs and interests of local citizens for parks and recreation facilities and services when available funding is limited. While this effort often causes anxiety among elected officials, parks and recreation professionals, and other officials, the reality that these services (unlike law enforcement and the courts) are not mandated results in less than ideal funding levels. Recent initiatives restricting spending and revenues have increased the challenges significantly.

The Thurston County Parks and Recreation Department adopted its comprehensive *Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Plan* in 1989. The plan set a high priority on creating partnerships and stretching limited resources to insure a viable countywide parks and recreation effort.

The department wasted little time in forming important partnership linkages with community groups, local jurisdictions, private businesses, school districts, and others to implement its

vision. This effort has resulted in close working relationships with the Thurston County Roads and Transportation Services Department for assistance in park and trail construction, intergovernmental agreements to provide regional special events and programs and services for citizens with special needs, and ultimately in the creation of new recreational facilities.

One major success story is the partnership between Thurston County and the City of Lacey to jointly acquire, develop, and manage a major 68-acre Regional Athletic Complex with six soccer fields, five baseball/softball fields, and a variety of other recreational amenities. The vision has expanded to a 110-acre facility with additional athletic fields and the potential for indoor recreation facilities to diversify the recreational opportunities available on the site.

To date, each jurisdiction has contributed in excess of \$3 million each toward acquiring the property and Phase I development. Upon completion, the facility will host many regional and statewide tournaments and other events. It opens in September 2005 and as

partners the city and county are poised to continue working together to maintain and operate the facility to reduce the financial load on either jurisdiction.

A second success story is the Griffin Athletic Fields project. This project became reality when the county and Griffin School District created a partnership to develop athletic fields on 40-acres the district owned and reserved for future school development. The district agreed to make this property available to the county for a 20-year period, allowing the county to apply for and receive a grant from the state Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to get the project on the ground.

Further partnerships were created with the county's Roads and Transportation Services Department, the Griffin School Foundation, the Westside Soccer Association, and Griffin Little Baseball.

Today, Thurston County manages two soccer fields and one baseball field for use by local citizens in a region of the county where no other similar facilities existed before. In return for providing the land, the school district receives first priority use of the property and facilities for school district purposes.

Lastly, the 49-mile Thurston County Regional Trail system has resulted from partnerships with every city in the county, the Thurston Regional Planning Council, the state Department of Transportation, local bicycle organizations, and private businesses to become one of the premier trail systems in the state.

Clearly, partnerships guarantee that successful lasting legacies can be created and perpetuated. Having cash isn't the only way to insure a successful parks and recreation initiative at the local level.

PHOTO / COURTESY OF THURSTON COUNTY



Thurston County and the City of Lacey jointly own and operate a Regional Athletic Complex.

Cheney parks and recreation – A community success story

By Don McDonald

Public Works Director, City of Cheney

The future of parks and recreation in the City of Cheney was very much in doubt in February of 2003 after the electorate voted down a tax increase to pay for parks and recreation.

The vote came about as a result of a substantial decrease in state revenues. Most notable was the loss of the state sales tax equalization subsidy that was abolished in conjunction with the elimination of the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax.

Cutting public safety was not an acceptable option to address the financial crisis. Rather than putting parks and recreation on the chopping block, the City Council chose instead to turn to the voters, but to no avail.

As a result, the 2003 calendar year proved to be the bleakest period in the history of parks and recreation in this city. All recreational services were eliminated, and all park restrooms remained closed. But perhaps, worst of all, the city's swimming pool; where generations of kids had learned to swim, was left dry throughout the summer.

The closure of the swimming pool had the most galvanizing affect upon the public in terms of bringing home the reality that without a financially viable alternative source of revenue there was virtually no hope of resuscitating the city's parks and recreation program. At the urging of concerned citizens throughout the community, the council placed an electrical and natural gas tax increase on the ballot in the fall of 2003. This time the tax measure was passed by a wide majority of the voters. The most tangible result of the vote occurred in the summer of 2004 with the reopening of the swimming pool, to the delight of the entire community.

After having to virtually start over when the voters breathed new life into parks and recreation the program of today bears little resemblance to the prior program. The Public Works Department is now responsible for maintaining the city's parks. A much greater emphasis has been placed on contracting with private organizations to provide activities such as soccer and baseball. The city hired a community recreation director to work with these private organizations as well as to

coordinate other recreational programs in the community tailored toward youth and adults alike.

Beyond these changes, the city is now turning its attention to the needs of the community for park and recreation capital facilities. Cheney has grown considerably in the past ten years and this has increased the demand for park and recreation facilities. The city has retained a consultant to perform a community wide needs assessment to develop a comprehensive plan to address community facility needs.

The city will utilize park mitigation funds assessed to new developments under the State Environmental Policy Act process to finance some of the capital cost. The city will also be actively looking for financial support from agencies such as the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation.

The city's parks and recreation program has made tremendous strides in becoming the healthy and vibrant operation that it is today. This would not have been possible were it not for the public's awareness that they ultimately controlled the fate of parks and recreation in Cheney.

Washington State Department of Community,
Trade and Economic Development

Growth Management Services
906 COLUMBIA STREET SW
PO BOX 42525 OLYMPIA, WA 98504-2525

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage Paid
Washington
State Dept. of
Printing